

A SERIOUS and FRIENDLY ADDRESS

To some of the
Inhabitants of
And others inclinable to
SKEPTICISM and INFIDELITY.

Are there, LORENZO? Is it possible?
Are there on Earth (let me not call them Men)
Who lodge a Soul immortal in their Breasts;
Unconscious as the Mountain of its Ore;
Or Rock, of its inestimable Gem?
When Rocks shall melt, and Mountains vanish, *These*
Shall know their Treasure; Treasure, *then*, no more.
Are there (still more amazing!) who resist
The rising Thought? Who smother, in its Birth,
The glorious Truth? Who struggle to be Brutes?
Who thro' this Bosom-Barrier burst their Way;
And, with reverse Ambition, strive to sink?
Who labour downwards thro' th' opposing Powers
Of Instinct, Reason, and the World against them,
To dismal Hopes, and shelter in the Shock
Of endless Night? Night darker than the Grave's?
Who fight the Proofs of Immortality?
With horrid Zeal, and execrable Arts,
Work all their Engines, level their black Fires,
To blot from Man *this* Attribute divine,
(Than vital Blood far dearer to the Wife)
Blasphemers, and rank Atheists to *Themselves*?
To contradict them, see all Nature rise!

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

Printed for, and sold by, J. WILBAR, in BARTON: Of whom
may be had Books and Writing Paper of all Sorts, Quills, Pens,
Ink, Wax, Slates, Magazines, &c. also Penknives and Playing
Cards.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.

A. D. D. H. S.



it
e
ta
c
tr
it
op
g
P
to
m
an
fe
It
fil
vo
pr
m
fo
ag
th
Fa
At

T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE Publisher thinks it not improper to inform the Reader from what motive it was that the following Treatise is published.—Uncommon liberties have of late been taken by some of those, to whom this publication is addressed, to censure and expose all true Religion as absurd and ridiculous; and it is to be feared that the false and seducing opinions and arguments of these Infidels will gain ground, if not seasonably checked.—People are too apt to believe what they wish to be true; hence so many swallow all those monstrous absurdities advanced by the Atheists and Skepticks, in order to reconcile themselves to their own wicked course of life.—It would be in some measure criminal to be silent, when these deluded men are endeavouring, by their sophistical arguments, to prove that God and Religion, and the Immortality of the Soul, are delusions and empty sounds.—We ought to speak and write against, as well as by our lives contradict, these professed Enemies of the Christian Faith.—The tenets and arguments of the Atheists and Skepticks have been refuted
time

time after time ; yet still they use them, which evidently shews their intention is not to discover Truth, but to spread Infection : Their notions are dangerous, because they are obscure ; in order to be confuted, they need only to be understood.——The whole design of this publication is to stop the mouths of such as deny or blaspheme the Great and Glorious GOD, or scoff at the sacred Scriptures and the public Worship of Almighty GOD, and to awaken in their minds a serious sense of Religion, and a true concern for the interest of their immortal Souls ; and to convince them that the Christian Religion really is what it was designed to be by our Lord and Saviour, (the great author of it) the only solid foundation of their present as well as future Happiness.——In the following pages, chiefly collected from the writings of eminent Divines, the Publisher humbly hopes such unanswerable proofs of a Deity, and of the authenticity of the sacred Scriptures, are produced, as render it impossible for any man, capable of conviction, to withstand or resist.——If they should suggest to the Young and Unwary any Cautions against those dangerous principles, the Publisher's purpose will be completely answered.

A

Serious and Friendly ADDRESS, &c.

Man falls by man, if finally he falls,
And fall he must, who learns from death alone,
The dreadful secret, that he lives for ever!

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

THE most universal cause why men make a jest of the sacred Scriptures and public Worship of Almighty God, is a strong settled unbelief of a Future Judgment; for who that allowed a bare possibility, much more a certainty, of a Future State, would run the risk of it, and sport himself with his own destruction?

It is not excess of Courage, but Infidelity, not a Fearless, but a Faithless Spirit that makes them so fool-hardy.

They have been so long used to make a Jest of Religion, that they fancy that God will make as light of it too, at least will never call them to a serious reckoning for what they committed in jest.

Jesting at the sacred Scriptures, and our most holy Religion, having no shadow of
A reason,

reason, no spark of common sense, no glimmering of wit, and nothing but laughter, noise, and nonsense to support it, would soon be baffled, did it meet with a vigorous opposition. No body would affect such a ridiculous singularity, as to jest and make sport with that, for which all about him express the utmost veneration and reverence, and if it were but for the shame of their neighbours and acquaintance, they would have more wit and manners than to shew it, did we express that just indignation which the case requires; so that our unconcern is the main cause of their outrageous madness.—While we are silent they are emboldened to shew the utmost contempt; whereas, did we demean ourselves as we ought to do, their senseless scoffing and mirth would be soon quashed and put out of countenance.

Should we call them Fools for mocking and jesting at the sacred Scriptures and our most holy Religion, from whence they affect the reputation of Wits, and set up for Men of Sense, it would be the greatest baulk, the worst disappointment that could befall them. This is the principal topic upon which they can shew their parts, and little suspect that it most miserably betrays the shallowness of their understandings; for what surer mark can there be of a Fool or Madman, than an
unreasonable

unseasonable and unseemly mirth, a frothy and jesting behaviour, on the most serious and solemn occasions.—The Prince of Darkness, who sets them on to make a Jest of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion, plies all his engines to extinguish in them the sentiments of a life to come, because these sap the very foundations of his dark kingdom, and effectually countermines his devices against the salvation of men.—He knows better himself; however he thinks fit to have them affected, he is not so frolicksome as to play with his chains, those chains of darkness wherein he is reserved unto judgment; but in sober sadness believes and trembles. He could tell them (if it was for his turn) such tragical stories of sin, as would dry up their merry vein, and change it into the deepest melancholy, as would make their hair stand an end, and their very hearts bleed within them: He could acquaint them what a dismal change it made in himself and his fellow apostates, how it turned them in an instant from Angels to Devils, from the brightest Stars in Heaven to the blackest Brands in Hell: How it plunged them at once from the height of Happiness and Glory to the lowest abyss of Shame and Misery.—But all this our Scorers will take time to believe, and the time will certainly come when they shall believe and tremble!

The Contents of Religion are awful, and of infinite importance, and it is the part of a wise man to examine them seriously; but to abuse them with prophane Jest, renders not Religion ridiculous, but the Jester, who trifles and sports with his own destruction.

And now, is Sin a laughing matter, a thing to be mocked at? And is he not worse than a madman who casteth these firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith am I not in sport?

Consider what it is to be an instrument of Satan, in poisoning others with wicked principles, which you sometime or other will severely repent, as surely as there is a God in heaven, and rational men upon earth.—Alas! what restitution can you make to the world for these damages? Or what can you give in exchange for the souls you have by your examples undone for ever?

You must first persuade yourselves out of your senses as well as reason, must put out your eyes, and all the glorious lights of Heaven, before you can start the least doubt of his eternal Power and Godhead, for “the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work.”

It

It is to be feared that all our modern Infidels and Skepticks, whatever scheme for argument's sake, and to keep themselves in countenance they patronize, are betrayed into their deplorable error by some doubt of their Immortality at the bottom, for it is impossible to bid defiance to final ruin, without some refuge in imagination, some presumption of escape—in non-existence therefore is their only refuge, and consequently non-existence is their strongest wish. The gross absurdities and horrors of annihilation are most astonishing!

To close, Lorenzo! spite of all my pains,
Still seems it strange that thou shouldst live for ever?
Is it less strange that thou shouldst live at all?

This is a miracle, and that no more.

Who gave beginning can exclude an end.

Deny thou art: Then doubt if thou shalt be.

A miracle, with miracles inclosed,

Is man————

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

“ There is a God; and that there is, all Nature cries aloud throughout her Works!”

Wherever we turn our eyes, whether we contemplate our own marvellous and exquisitely-contrived frame, the structure and well-adapted parts of our bodies, the wonderful different motions of its fluid and solid parts, and the perfectness of its whole structure, or consider the faculties reach, and amazing com-

comprehension of our own soul, we cannot fail to admire the extreme extent and force of our understanding, the incredible rapidity of our thoughts, the subtilty of our invention, the treasures of our memory, the infinite variety of our designs, and the inexhaustible depth of our will!—The whole so amazingly contrived, that we may trace the Almighty Creator in every part; his form erect, far superior to the rest of the creation here below.—Why so miraculously framed, if not for Eternity?

If not yet convinced, view the azure expanse, the firmament above us, with all its glorious furniture, the sun, the moon, and the stars; or take a survey of the earth beneath us, with all its crowded and innumerable wonders and blessings, in every view, in every object, we may read in legible and glorious characters ALMIGHTY GOD the BENEFACTOR.

View the sun, and then consider who but an Almighty Power could be able to make so prodigious a globe of fire as the sun is, a body of so immense a bulk, of such an excessive heat, that this world, was it not placed at a due distance from it, would be burnt up; but the distance is wisely ordered by the Great Creator.

Also

Also contemplate the moon and stars, which supply the sun's absence, and rule the night, as the greater light (the sun) rules the day.—The monthly revolutions of the moon, besides the uses they have (amongst many others) in the daily variations of the tides, their excellent use in the divisions of time, in measuring out our months, as the sun doth our days and years, according to the appointment of the Great Creator. “And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.”

These are evident demonstrations, and a glorious scene of the great works of God!

The stars, which although in appearance are but so many golden or flaming spots, yet especially the fixt stars are, with great probability, supposed to be so many suns surrounded with their respective systems of planets, as our sun is, and imagined to be no less in magnitude than the sun, but only diminished in appearance by their prodigious distance from us!—If now we reflect upon the prodigious masses of those many heavenly bodies, or globes, that present themselves to our view, and many more which are unseen, what a surprizing scene do the Heavens afford us of the Great Creator's power?

A

A train of such immense bodies, that what less than an Almighty God could compose such magnificent works?

The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work. They speak to the whole universe, for there is neither speech so barbarous but their language is understood, nor nations so distant but their voices are heard among them.

But then, what is the magnitude of these bodies to that immense space in which they are placed?

Is it possible, after such a view of the heavenly globes, that any one should be an Atheist, or Skeptick, or endeavour to persuade others to be so?

Turn up thine eye, survey this midnight scene:
What are earth's kingdoms to yon boundless orbs,
Of human souls one day the destin'd range?
And what yon boundless orbs to godlike man?
Those num'rous worlds that throng the firmament,
And ask more space in heav'n, can roll at large
In man's capacious thought, and still leave room
For ampler orbs; for new creations there.

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

Let us descend to the Earth.—There is not the meanest production in nature, but which sufficiently testifies the hand of an intelligent

telligent Former. Not the minutest blade of grass, not the smallest insect which creepeth upon the earth, but bespeaks Wisdom and Design, and convinces us that not Chance, but sovereign Reason was evidently consulted in their formation.—The animal world displays this in a peculiar manner, where the least attention must discern, in the external frame of the creatures, an immediate subserviency to the mode of existence for which they are designed, their senses adapted to their several pursuits, and their strength, fleetness, or other peculiarities immediately adapted to the end of their being.

As to the sacred Scriptures, which our modern Deists, Infidels, and Skepticks so much scoff and jest at, pretending they want proof of the authenticity thereof, its proof (as will in this Treatise be shewn) is not only great, but amazing! not only sufficient to convince, but astonish! such its evidence, that, if rejected, it lays us under a necessity of rejecting reason and revelation together.

The majesty and authority of the style both of the Old and New Testament far excel all the eloquence and art of human writings.—The series of scripture prophecies accomplished, is the most striking of miracles; the scripture prophecies being ful-
B
filled.

filled, the Scripture is certainly the Word of God; and if the Scripture is the Word of God, Christianity cannot be false.

You probably will ask whether the Scriptures are the genuine productions of those men whose names they bear; that is, whether Moses, for instance, and David, whether Isaiah and St. Matthew, St. John and St. Paul, were really the writers of the books which are commonly attributed to them? or whether these books were forged by some designing men, and imposed upon the credulity of mankind?

Now, to answer this question, suffer me to ask in return: You read the writings of Homer and Virgil, of Pindar and Horace, pray do you think these are the genuine works of those authors? Yes, surely, you reply.—Well then, suffer me to ask again, upon what grounds are you thus undoubtedly certain?—As they have the concurrent testimony, say you, of all mankind, of all ages, they have been universally received and acknowledged as such wherever they were known. Besides there are internal marks; their style and manner of writing is their own. The notion of forgery is ridiculous; who could have forged such books? it was impossible; we have uncontroverted evidence of their reception,

tion, given by contemporary authors, from the very time of their publication.—This is all I desire. Now then apply what you say of these authors to the authors of the sacred Scriptures. Their works have the concurrent testimony of mankind; they have been universally acknowledged and received as the genuine works of those whose names they bear from the beginning; and it is not known that the bitterest enemies of these books, who have used their utmost efforts to expose and explode them, ever were so hardy as to venture upon the least hint of their being counterfeit, the agreement and uniform design of the Scriptures, their sound sense and divine instruction, render such a supposition ridiculous.—These writings too have internal marks, as well as those heathen classics; their style and manner is their own; read the five books of Moses, the poetical Psalms of David, the rapturous Flights of the Prophets—the Discourses of CHRIST, the plain sublime Narrative of St. John, and the close argumentative Epistles of St. Paul; and you must say, who could have forged such books; what mortal pen, or ability, was equal to the work? Pitch upon what time you will for the forgery of the writings of Moses and the Apostles, and you will soon see the impossibility of the supposition; it cannot be imagined that the whole nation of

the Jews would have joined with Moses in the cheat, if he had been an impostor. As to the writings of the Apostles, the argument holds still more strongly; for it is evident their Gospels were published very early, as authentic testimonies shew, and at a time when the facts they delivered could have been so easily detected if they had been impostors; and with respect to the Old Testament it is scarcely supposeable, this book having been preserved amongst the Jews with the most scrupulous exactness.—And as to the writings of the New Testament, interpolations have been still less probable, on account of the high esteem and veneration in which they have been ever held, of the multitude of copies and early translations thereof, which left no room for fraud or inattention to do them any material injury. On account of the citations which have been made out of them by Christian Writers in all ages, and on account of the divisions and sects which early arose amongst Christians, and caused them to keep so watchful an eye upon each other, that no adulterations could ensue in that sacred text, the purity of which was the common concern of all. And indeed after all the collations of copies and examination of manuscripts, after all the nice and punctilious criticism, which has been happily employed in investigating the letter
of

of the sacred text, it is pleasing to remark how great an agreement there is, and how inconsiderable the variations are, which the most minute observator has traced out, and of which the providence of God has taken so much care, that no corruption has crept into the text, but what has been detected.

Let it suffice at present to observe, that as these writings bear the earliest marks of wisdom, design, and penetration, they could not have been the works of weak or foolish Enthusiasts, nor could they have been the forgery of good or of bad men. Good men, it is plain, could never have forged such writings; for no man can be a good one, and at the same time an impudent liar; nay, the very worst and most impudent in presuming to father his compositions upon the Omniscient, and in declaring that what he wrote was communicated and revealed to him by God himself, this is inconsistent with the least ray of goodness; good men therefore could never have forged these books; much less are they to be conceived as the work of bad men, for a kingdom divided against itself must necessarily fall. And it is the very height of absurdity to suppose that wicked men would forge books, the sole end and design of which is to promote virtue and holiness; books in which such excellent rules of life are laid down, as
are

are no where to be met with in all the schools of heathen moralists.—And by the way, how could these men have attained such superior wisdom, and have excelled all the wisest of the wise in the delineation of truth?—It is unreasonable then to suppose that wicked and worldly men should have forged these books, which contain maxims so entirely destructive of their own interest; and it is a consequence easily to be drawn, that if these books could not be forged either by good or bad men; if they are too wise and too rational for the pen of deluded Enthusiasts, they must of necessity be what they assume, the composition of men commissioned and inspired by the most High to reveal his sacred will.

Let us observe farther, that the men by whom the Scriptures were penned, or under whose direction and authority they were written, laid claim to the divine assistance, asserted a divine commission, and proved themselves really possessed of it, not only by working the most stupendous MIRACLES, but by delivering Prophecies and preaching DOCTRINES too sublime for human invention—by converting nations, and by giving up their own lives (which their worst enemies could not charge with guilt) in attestation of the truths they taught.

MIRACLES

MIRACLES may be so circumstanced, as to be sufficient proofs in themselves of a divine commission. Nicodemus seems to have thought so, when he came to JESUS, and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from GOD, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except GOD be with him;" and our Saviour plainly refers to this proof when he says, "at least believe me for the work sake." For I would ask any reasonable man, whether he could doubt of that person's divine commission, who should come to him preaching as he declared in the name of GOD, and in proof thereof should raise the dead, give sight to the blind, health to the sick, &c. &c. and this not once only, but repeatedly, in the most public manner, before all persons, in all places, and at all times, no man could doubt that such a Messenger was really from GOD, who enabled him to perform such mighty works. But then, if the life of such a Messenger of GOD was wholly irreproachable; if we saw him illustrious for his virtues, single in his views, and undaunted at the greatest difficulties; if we saw him treated with the most cruel severity, solely on account of the doctrines he taught, nay, and at length yielding up his life, with patience and cheerfulness, amidst the most horrid tortures, in attestation of his doctrines, a recantation of which would
be

be sufficient to save him ; if, moreover, these doctrines were found to be not only reasonable, but excellent, calculated in every respect for the present and future happiness of mankind ;—in such a case, which of us could refuse our assent, how could we hesitate a moment to embrace the doctrines offered to us by a Man thus evidently commissioned by God ? Apply this to the Writers of the New Testament, and in some measure to those of the Old, and you will have abundant evidence of their divine authority.

Let me just observe, that a proof of the divine authority of the New Testament necessarily involves that of the Old : Since if CHRIST and his Apostles were what they assume, and we believe, Moses and the Prophets, to whom they continually refer as divinely commissioned, were also the delegated messengers of the most High.

But observe we, that the prophecies of the Old Testament, no less than those of the New, prove the divine authority of these books ; it is a certain truth that God only can discern and foretel future events.

It is indisputable that future events, and those many in number, extraordinary in their circumstances, and very improbable in their nature,

nature, were foretold, many ages before their accomplishment, in the Old Testament, and many years before in the New.

An able Writer hath proved the Truth of the New Testament from the Discourses of our Saviour. My bounds will not allow me to dwell upon these, nor upon that wonderful agreement observable in all the parts of the sacred writings; that unity, as well as elevation of design, which must strike every attentive reader.

The majesty which reigns in these sacred writings, fills us with a solemn kind of astonishment; the Gospel speaks in a powerful and commanding language to the feelings of our hearts. Cast your eye on the writings of the Philosophers, behold them in all their studied pomp, and see how trifling, how insignificant they appear, when compared with the holy records of the Gospel?—Is it possible that a book so sublime, and yet so artless and simple, can be a production merely human?—Is it possible that the person, whose history it unfolds, can be considered by any as a mere man? Hear him speak, behold his actions!—Is that the language of Enthusiasm?—Is that the lordly tone of an ambitious Ringleader? On the contrary, what gentleness and purity in his manners! what mildness and affecting
G
grace

grace in his instructions! what elevation and dignity in his maxims! what deep wisdom in his discourse! what presence of mind, what exactness and precision in his answers to the demands of the ignorant, or the objections of the perverse? What an amazing empire over his passions did his whole conduct and conversation discover!—That pure and sublime morality that was inculcated in our Saviour's instructions, shone forth in his example, and which he alone taught and practised in the midst of people, where the most furious enthusiasm reigned.—Will any one say that the Gospel History is all mere Fiction? Be assured that impostors go to work in a different manner. Here is nothing that has the air of fiction; and the facts relating to diverse historians, (of which no mortal entertains the least doubt) are not so well attested as those which are recorded in the History of CHRIST.—Jewish writers, with all their efforts, could never have arose to that noble and elevated tone, to that pure and sublime morality, that reigns in the Gospel; and the History of JESUS is clothed with such characters of truth, with such lines of credibility, that have something in them grand, striking, and absolutely inimitable.

As to the Inspiration of the holy Scriptures, it has been in a great measure already
proved

proved from their authenticity, and the divine authority of them. By inspiration in general, I would be understood to mean any supernatural influence of God upon the mind of a rational creature, whereby it is formed to any degree of intellectual improvement, beyond what it would at that time, and in those circumstances, have attained in a natural way; that is, by the usual exercise of its faculties, unassisted by any **special divine interposition**.

That the Apostles were inspired, will appear by a perusal of those amazing facts in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read of the Spirit's descent upon these men, and enabling them, illiterate, poor, and weak as they were, not only to speak all languages, but to work all miracles, and to spread their doctrines over all nations.—And when we reflect who and what the Apostles were, how they were favoured and assisted of God, what difficulties they underwent, what success they had, our veneration for their writings must be unparalleled.

This argument is much enforced, on the one hand, by the express and comprehensive promises which our Redeemer made to his Apostles; and, on the other, by the peculiar language which the Apostles themselves speak of their preaching and writings, and

the high regard they challenge to each; a regard which nothing could justify them in demanding, but a consciousness that they were under a full inspiration.

Let us therefore submissively and reverently attend to the dictates of this sacred Oracle, and remember (however we may differ in other matters) that this is agreed on by all, that the great design of the New Testament (in delightful harmony with the Old) is to call off our minds from the present world, to establish us in the belief of a future state, and to form us for a serious preparation for it, by bringing us to a lively faith in CHRIST, and, as the genuine effect of that faith, to a filial love of GOD, and a fraternal affection for each other.

The establishment of the Christian Religion amongst men, is the greatest of all miracles. In spite of all the powers of Rome, of all the passions, interests, and prejudices of so many nations, so many philosophers, so many different religions, twelve poor Fishermen, without art, without eloquence, without power, publish and spread their doctrine throughout the world, in spite of a persecution for three centuries, which seemed every moment ready to extinguish it; in spite of continued and innumerable martyrdoms of persons

persons of all conditions, sexes, and countries, the Truth in the end triumphs over Error, pursuant to the predictions both of the Old and New Testament. Let any one shew some other religion which has the same marks of a divine protection.

A powerful conqueror may establish by his arms the belief of a religion which flatters the sensuality of men; a wise legislator may gain himself attention and respect by the usefulness of his laws. All this is possible; but what could victorious, learned, and superstitious nations see to reduce them so readily to JESUS CHRIST, who promised them nothing in this world but persecutions and sufferings; who proposed to them the practice of a morality to which all darling passions must be sacrificed. Is not the conversion of multitudes of all nations to such a religion in contradiction to the established religion of their own, and of all the neighbouring kingdoms, most miraculous and astonishing?

The Prophet Daniel in particular had so exactly marked the æra when this Desire of all Nations was to appear, that it could not be mistaken; the fame of it had spread abroad, and not among the Jews only, but amongst various other people. A strong expectation prevailed of His coming, who was
promised

promised to Adam, to Abraham, and to all the faithful Patriarchs of old; and at this very crisis, when universal expectation was looking for him, the CHRIST was born; born at the place where the Prophets had long before fixed his birth; born of a Virgin, as they had foretold; and born with no small attestation of his divinity from Heaven, for Angels ushered in his blessed appearance with songs of gratulations, and sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

Not a few only, nay not several, not the greater part, but every individual circumstance, which the Prophets had foretold of the Messiah, was fulfilled in JESUS CHRIST. He is the center in whom all the rays of the compleat circle of their predictions meet; this is a point again diligently to be regarded. It may be possible to find some in whom one or more prophecies were fulfilled; but shew me the person (if you can) besides JESUS CHRIST, in whom all the prophecies are fulfilled; and if you will collect, with the utmost diligence, all the predictions in the prophecies concerning the Messiah, you will find they have all been fulfilled (so far as respects their present completion, for doubtless there are some which yet remain to be fulfilled) in our Redeemer JESUS CHRIST. And
can

can you desire a stronger argument to prove that he was the Seed of the Woman, the Seed of Abraham, the promised Shiloh, the Desire of all Nations?—As sacrifices had from the beginning prefigured him in his office of Redeemer, we find accordingly that he himself became a sacrifice, the great anti-type and completion of all the typical sacrifices offered from the beginning of the world; he lived a life of suffering, and at length voluntarily offered himself upon the cross as a ransom for the sins of the world.

CHRIST was not only the expectation of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also: The Prophet Haggai calls him the Desire of all Nations; and that the Gentiles had this general expectation, is very evident.—How literally was the prophecy, that he should be the Expectation of the Gentiles, fulfilled in the Magi coming from the East, as St. Matthew relates.—Now this fact of the Magi, or Wisemen, coming to CHRIST, has those same evidences that the truth of the Bible generally has, which are more than can be produced for any other book in the world; and as to this fact in particular, St. Matthew was the first who wrote the Gospel; and it was in the same age when this fact was said to be done, (viz. about eight years after the death of CHRIST, Anno Dom. 41) and can you think it possible
that

that such a fact as this could have passed without contradiction, and a public exposing of Christianity? then so desirable, and so much endeavoured by the unbelieving Jews, their High Priests, Elders, &c. as the only means for their own preservation, if the fact had not been notorious, and fresh in the memory of all the people then at Jerusalem, viz. that these Wisemen came thither, and that Herod and the whole city were troubled at the news they brought of the birth of the King of the Jews; that Herod thereupon gathered all the Chief Priests and Scribes of the people together, that they might search out of the Prophets, and know the place where CHRIST should be born; and then the slaughter of the Innocents, in and about Jerusalem, which followed. I say, could such a fact as this have passed at that very time, if it had not been true? Could St. Matthew have hoped to have imposed this upon all the people, and upon those very same Chief Priests and Scribes, who he said were so far concerned in it? Would none of them have contradicted it if it had been a forgery? Especially when the detecting it would have strangled Christianity in its birth, would not they have done it, who suborned false witnesses against CHRIST, and gave large money to the soldiers to conceal, if possible, his resurrection? Our blessed LORD also prophesied (which is
very

very remarkable) that his Gospel should prevail all over the world, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. To prove any thing against the Christian Religion, they must shew the inconsistency of the Scriptures with the history of those times, and that the Jews were not under the Roman government; that there was no taxation in the reign of Augustus.—By the relation and testimony of Tacitus (an eminent author at that time) it appears that CHRIST was; had there not been such a person, how comes Julian, Celeus, Porphry, and Lucian (other authors) to have known or mentioned it?—Another proof is, that there is nothing in the Scriptures unbecoming the divine Majesty.—Some object, We have many of the infirmities discovered in the Apostles, as their quarrels, frailties, &c. By this we have an evident sign that they were no impostors; for had they sought applause, would they have so loudly proclaimed their faults?

Also object, Why do not miracles still continue? Because miracles were only for the confirmation of the Christian Faith, which being effected, they ceased; and therefore to ask why they do not continue to prove the truth of the former, is as much as to ask why they do not make a new sun or moon, to satisfy the Atheists he made the old?

D

The

The Bible, as we have it in our hands, with all the imperfections which Deists and Skepticks are desirous to load it with, may truly be said to be the most excellent book in our own or in any other language; it does undoubtedly contain a sufficient account of the divine dispensations, and may justly be considered as the principal support of true Religion and moral Virtue.

That this is really fact, may reasonably be presumed from hence, that wherever the Scriptures are either totally or partially unknown, there ever has been, and ever will be found a proportional ignorance or neglect both of Religion and Morality.

What judgment can we, when most charitably inclined, form of these persons, who, upon a pretence of Reason, would reject the Scriptures as being incredible, and yet at the same time blindly and greedily devour the monstrous and impossible Absurdities of Infidelity and Atheism: It is such an insult upon common sense, and such a preposterous absurdity, as none but the most narrow-minded Infidel can submit to.

Yet let not the humble Advocate for Reason and the Scriptures be dismayed, or fear that the structure of God's Word shall be
over-

overthrown by the vain breach of such blasphemous suggestions.—These flights of impiety, whether from the pen of Hobbs, Spinoza, Bolingbroke, &c. or from the pens of our modern Atheists and Skepticks, will all produce the same effect, will all tend to the honour of God, and the farther establishment of those divine oracles, the authenticity of which they were intended to destroy.

Another strong proof of the divine Origin of the Christian Religion, is the tendency it has to promote the happiness of individuals, of societies, and of all mankind,

The prophecies both of the Old and New Testament, concerning the Jews, are another very striking proof of the Truth of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion.—They are dispersed amongst all nations, and yet preserved a distinct people from all the earth, though without any country of their own, or king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice; and they are thus preserved by the providence of God, (so as never any nation was since the foundation of the world) to shew the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning them, and the judgment denounced against them for their crucifying their Messiah. And it is wonderful to consider how expressly their present state is prophesied of, that it could

not be more literal, if it were to be worded now by us who see it, as that they should be scattered into all countries, sifted as with a sieve among all nations, yet preserved a people; and that God would make an utter end of those nations who had oppressed them, and blot out their names from under heaven (as we have seen it fulfilled upon the great empires of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Romans, who one after another had miserably wasted the Jews); but that the name of the Jews (the fewest and the poorest of all nations) should remain for ever, and they a people distinct from all the nations in the world, though scattered among them all. Read what the prophecies express upon this point, Jer. xxx. 11. xxxi. 36, 37; Jer. xxxiii. 24, 25, 26; Jer. xlvi. 28; Ezek. vi. 8; Ezek. xi. 16, 17; Ezek. xii. 15, 16; Amos ix. 8, 9; Zech. x. 9. And it was foretold them long before that thus it would be, Lev. xxvi. 44; Deut. iv. 27, 30, 31; and you see all these prophecies literally fulfilled and fulfilling. The like cannot be said of any other nation which ever was upon the earth, so destroyed, and so preserved, and for so long a time! having worn out all the empires of the world, and still surviving them! to fulfil what was prophesied of them to the end of the world! How particularly did our Saviour foretel the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Matth.

Matth. xxiv. and that that age should not pass till it should be fulfilled? And his very expression was literally fulfilled, that there should not be left one stone upon another in the Temple, for the very foundations of it were ploughed up by Turnus Rufus.

One argument more——that Christianity, by its nature, is calculated to be an universal and perpetual Religion.——The Religion of the Heathens was veiled and obscure, kept concealed from the eyes of the world, and only laid open to those who had the care of the public offices; their systems were never committed to writing by those who had the care of them, for they were only communicated by tradition, and handed down from one generation to another, by those who were consecrated or set apart for the purpose; so that the people were left entirely to their own guessing, as to the nature of them, and the outward forms were commanded and enforced in the same manner as the laws for the good of the state.——As then the Religion of the Heathens was so much veiled, and considered as a mysterious affair, so little submitted to the inspection of, and so little understood by the people in general, it seems a consequence equally rational and obvious, that no system of theirs was ever calculated for universality.

Another

Another reason for the universality of the Christian Religion, is, that its doctrines are rendered practicable by human nature, and agreeable to its real good, by their being exemplified in the life and conduct of JESUS CHRIST. No founder of any system ever openly practised all those duties which he recommended to others, or was himself an example of those rules which he laid down as a standard for the rest of mankind, except the Author of the Christian Religion, who himself practised all the distinguishing parts of his institution; so that in the highest sense he was a pattern as well as teacher of his laws.

In the proofs of the sacred writings I have exceeded my intended bounds, being desirous fully to convince my Reader of the Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion, above all other religions in the world,

Read and revere the sacred Page ; a Page,
Where triumphs Immortality ; a Page
Which not the whole Creation could produce ;
Which not the Conflagration shall destroy ;
In Nature's Ruins not one Letter lost :
'Tis printed in the Mind of Gods for ever,

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

If you believe there is a God who created,
and continues to preserve and govern the
world ;

world; if you are convinced of this, how can you be guilty of so heinous a contempt of him, as seldom or never to be seen in his house? Natural as well as revealed Religion teaches us, that God should be honoured and worshipped by his creatures; the great variety of temporal blessings we daily receive from him, demand our most devout adoration; and if we have any concern for our immortal souls, or desire to be happy in another world, we ought to use the means appointed for our spiritual edification; it should be our delight to pray to God, to praise his holy name, and hear the glad tidings of grace and salvation by JESUS CHRIST. Can any man reflect that to him he owes his being, that it was the effect of God's sovereign good pleasure that he bears an human form, and boasts an immortal soul, and still neglect to worship and adore him? Those who habitually omit these great and important duties, not only deprive themselves of many blessings, and endanger their own eternal welfare, but also corrupt others by their pernicious examples.

It is, besides, flying in the face of human as well as divine authority, for the laws of our country do strictly injoin us to attend the public worship of Almighty God: Let me beseech you then to weigh these things, and no longer allow yourselves in so criminal an omission.

omission. Act like reasonable creatures in loving and worshipping the God who made you, and gives you all things richly to enjoy. How can a man reflect on these important truths, and withhold from his God, his Creator, Benefactor, and Friend, the thought of wonder, and the language of adoration?

Pray'r ardent opens Heav'n, lets down a stream
Of Glory on the consecrated hour:
Of Man, in audience with the Deity;
Who worships the Great God, that instant joins,
The first in Heav'n, and sets his foot on hell.

NIGHT-THOUGHTS:

When we consider the riches of his fatherly love in REDEMPTION, what do we not owe? What ought we not to feel for him, who to redeem us from misery, and to advance our fallen state, infinitely debased himself, and eclipsed the brightness of his glorious Majesty, not disdaining to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, to appear in our shape, to converse with us, as it were, upon equal terms, and at last to taste the bitter cup of a most painful and disgraceful death for us? We therefore ought to conclude from the whole History of Redemption, brought down from the first promise in paradise, through all succeeding ages, to its full completion in our Saviour's death and resurrection at Jerusalem, that it was highly necessary

necessary for mankind, as well as for the honour of the Deity, to redeem the human race in this manner. Consider the vast preparations made, and so long made for this great event; consider the manner in which it was accomplished, and all the miracles and wonders which attested the divine interposition! and you will have no doubt of the necessity and expediency of this adorable Redemption.

Oh! may these Scoffers and Jesters at God and our most holy Religion (who bid defiance to their Creator) consider in time the nature of this sin, what a dreadful guilt it involves them in, how highly it incenses the divine Majesty, what slender satisfaction it can yield, and how little temptation they can have to commit it; and how utterly inconsistent, upon all these accounts, it must be, as well with reason as their eternal salvation.

How foolish and absurd is the conduct of Freethinkers and Skepticks, who are amusing themselves with dreams of boasted Reason! What is more rational than Christianity, or more worthy of all acceptance? It has been esteemed so by men of the best geniusses in all ages since its institution; and it is certain that the divine and excellent Religion of our

E

Lord

LORD JESUS CHRIST, purely and steadily practised, makes the happiest and most desirable life on earth; its present peace and blessed hope cannot be duly valued or expressed.— And if we seriously weigh the solid wisdom, usefulness, and excellency of a pious life, against the folly, infinite hazard, and baseness of a vicious one; and withall consider the true honour, delight, and peace which flow from the former, and the certain shame, horror, and confusion which attend the latter, especially in our last hours, (which are the chief of all) we cannot but see that true piety is, in its nature, unspeakably more excellent than its contrary, and therefore in this life lays the foundations of an eternal difference in the life to come, when a righteous God shall render to every one according to his works.

The Author of the Book of Wisdom represents Sinners wondering at the salvation of the Godly, and recanting of their wicked lives, thus:—“ We Fools accounted their
 “ life madness, and their end to be without
 “ honour. How are they numbered among
 “ the children of God, and their lot is among
 “ the Saints? We wearied ourselves in the
 “ ways of wickedness and destruction. What
 “ hath pride profited us, or what good hath
 “ riches with our vaunting brought us? All
 “ these

“ these are passed away as the shadow, and as
 “ a post that hasteth by. But the souls of
 “ the righteous are in the hand of GOD. In
 “ the sight of the unwise they seem to die,
 “ and their departure is taken for misery, and
 “ their going from us to be utter destruction,
 “ but they are in peace. For though they
 “ be punished in the sight of men, yet is
 “ their hope full of immortality; and having
 “ been a little chastised they are greatly re-
 “ warded, for GOD proved them, and found
 “ them worthy of himself.”

The Publisher sincerely wishes that this
 Treatise may influence its Readers to recant,
 and reform their lives; and humbly hopes,
 if seriously and attentively read, and consid-
 ered, with a desire to be convinced, that the
 proofs and arguments therein produced can-
 not fail of effecting such a happy change.

Think on these things, all ye that have
 power to think, and repent and reform with-
 out delay; and so live now, that ye may not
 reproach and condemn yourselves another
 day. Be assured that GOD and your sins will
 find you out, and that it is a fearful thing to
 fall into the hands of the living GOD!

A Foe to GOD was ne'er true Friend to Man.
 Some sinister intent taints all he does;
 And in his kindest actions he's unkind.

On Piety Humanity is built :
 And on Humanity much Happiness :
 And yet still more on Piety itself.
 A Soul in commerce with her GOD, is Heaven,
 Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life :
 The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart.

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

Your Conscience, that faithful Monitor, who in your retirement will be heard, and frequently represents to you the fatal consequences of your present course of life, will applaud the happy change.

The pleasures belonging to a good conscience never fatigues or wearies ; it is such a pleasure as is in no man's power, but his only that has it ; and he that is possessed of this rich property, may also be sure of its perpetuity ; it is not only out of the reach of an outward violence, but even those things which make a much closer impression upon us, which, after the irresistible decays of nature, have yet no influence at all upon this. For when age itself shall begin to arrest, seize, and remind us of our mortality, by pains, aches, deadness of limbs, and dulness of senses, yet then the pleasure of the mind shall be in its full youth and vigour. A palsy may as well shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair the delight of a good conscience,

science, for it lives within, it centers in the heart, it grows into the very substance of the soul, so that it accompanies a man to his grave; it is the foretaste of heaven, and the earnest of eternity. In a word, it affords such pleasures which "neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." How short of this are the delights of Epicures, Free-thinkers, and Skepticks. Since then all that is truly inviting to a rational being lies on the side of Religion, why does any one go on in the dangerous paths of Sin? which must of necessity end in a very bitter repentance, or in everlasting ruin. O! may all who offend a just and holy God, repent and reform without delay, and become duly and timely serious in matters of such infinite importance!

As it were to preserve us from building up airy and unsubstantial hopes, to keep us always in a state of fitness and expectation, to awaken all our zeal, and to quicken every endeavour, DEATH, clothed in a thousand shapes, surrounds us, shakes over us his tremendous dart, and points, with fearful admonition, to that solemn Eternity, into which we must all one day embark, and where, awful and alarming thought! we must for ever live

live in Bliss or Misery, consummate and unchangeable! Can we want further motives, can we conceive stronger obligations? Can we desire calls more solemn, or arguments more engaging, to the practice of the Christian Religion, to be zealous and repent? Therefore, having our eye steadily fixed on the Captain of our Salvation, let us march with intrepidity and undaunted courage thro' the field of life in the Christian Warfare, unmoved by difficulties, unshaken by temptations, unawed by the menaces of wicked men, and regardless of their scoffs and slanders; let not afflictions nor distresses retard our progress; let not scoffs nor reproaches impede our course; at length, having surmounted the dangers and vicissitudes of time, may we be removed into an eternity of bliss inexpressible, and uninterrupted joy.

May these unhappy Scoffers and Jesters at God and Religion, remember the Scriptures' Representation of the Day of Judgment, in sublime figures describing it so dreadful to Sinners, (whose astonishment and confusion will be so great) that, rather than stand the awful terrors of it, they shall "call on the mountains to fall on them, and the hills to cover them!" How terrible then must the Great Day of the LORD be?

At

At midnight, when mankind is wrapt in peace,
And worldly fancy feeds on golden dreams;
To give more dread to man's most dreadful hour,
At midnight 'tis presum'd, this pomp will burst
From tenfold darkness; sudden as the spark
From smitten steel; from nitrous grain the blaze.
Man starting from his couch, shall sleep no more!
The day is broke, which never more shall close!
Above, around, beneath, amazement all!

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

May GOD of his great goodness give a blessing to these weak endeavours, and make them instrumental to his glory, and the good of souls.

PHILANTHROPOS.

 The Author being at a Distance from the Press, the candid Reader is desired to excuse any Faults that may have escaped.



